

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 1000713Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9184
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 435

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SEDU PGOV LA FR
SUBJECT: EFFECT OF LPDR RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE FOREIGN SCHOOLS

REF: VIENTIANE 0250

1. AS NOTED REFTTEL, THE LAO GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTED A CIRCULAR NOTE DATED FEBRUARY 20 TO ALL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS INFORMING THEM THAT:
 - A. ONLY PRIMARY LEVEL PRIVATE FOREIGN SCHOOLS COULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN LAOS;
 - B. FOREIGN SCHOOLS MUST INCLUDE NINETEEN HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE LAO LANGUAGE PER WEEK;
 - C. ALL PRIVATE FOREIGN SCHOOLS MUST SUBMIT TO THE CONTROL OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

2. THE NOTE ALSO ADDRESSED ITSELF TO EMBASSY SCHOOLS
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STATING THAT:

A. EMBASSIES, AT THEIR REQUEST, MAY BE AUTHORIZED TO ORGANIZE SCHOOLS OR SPECIAL COURSES INTENDED EXCLUSIVELY FOR CHILDREN OF THEIR PERSONNEL (NON-LOCAL) AND THEIR NON-RESIDENT NATIONALS. EMBASSY ORGANIZED SCHOOLS

WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ACCEPT ENROLLMENT BY LAO CHILDREN OR FOREIGN RESIDENTS OF LAOS (PRESUMABLY FOREIGN RESIDENTS NOT OF THE NATIONALITY OF THE EMBASSY ORGANIZING THE SCHOOL).(1

B. FOREIGN MISSIONS COULD ORGANIZE NO OTHER SCHOOLS THAN THOSE SPECIFIED IN THE NOTE. ANY EXISTING SCHOOLS WHICH DID NOT MEET THE ABOVE RESTRICTIONS WERE NO LONGER AUTHORIZED.

3. A FRENCH DIPLOMAT TOLD US APRIL 9 THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY WAS WEIGHING A DECISION TO CLOSE PERMANENTLY THE FRENCH EMBASSY SCHOOL WHEN THE TERM ENDS IN JUNE. THE DIPLOMAT EXPLAINED THAT THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE IN PURPOSEFUL COMPLIANCE WITH THE RECENT LAO GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN SCHOOLS BUT RATHER A RESULT OF THE ANTICIPATED DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF FRENCH CHILDREN AND TEACHERS RETURNING TO LAOS AFTER THE SUMMER HOLIDAY. (ALL FRENCH TEACHERS EXCEPT SIX DOING ALTERNATE MILITARY SERVICE HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED THAT THEIR CONTRACTS ARE TERMINATED AS OF SEPTEMBER.)

4. THE FRENCH EMBASSY CURRENTLY INTERPRETS THE LAO RESTRICTIONS AS NOT PROHIBITING THE ATTENDANCE AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY SCHOOL OF FRENCH SPEAKING CHILDREN BELONGING TO THIRD NATION FAMILIES (E.G., UN EXPERTS).

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5. THE LAO RESTRICTIONS PROHIBITING PGOA CHILDREN FROM ATTENDING FOREIGN SCHOOLS HAS BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE THE DELICATE PROBLEM OF METISE (MIXED-RACE) CHILDREN. BOTH THE FRENCH AND LAO GOVERNMENTS REGARD METISE CHILDREN AS THEIR OWN NATIONALS. SEVERAL FRENCH DIPLOMATS HAVE TOLD US THAT PARENTS OF METISE CHILDREN IN LAOS ARE QUIETLY MAKING PREPARATIONS TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO FRANCE.

6. CHINESE SCHOOLS IN VIENTIANE CONTINUE IN OPERATION WITHOUT ANY APPARENT CHANGE IN SCHEDULES OR COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY IN ATTENDANCE. THE CHINESE SCHOOLS HAD ALREADY INCLUDED LAO INSTRUCTION IN THEIR CURRICULA PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE LAO GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS, AND IN GENERAL THEY FUNCTIONED IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAO GOVERNMENT POLICY. THE CHINESE SCHOOLS OPERATE ONLY AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL.
ROBERTS

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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